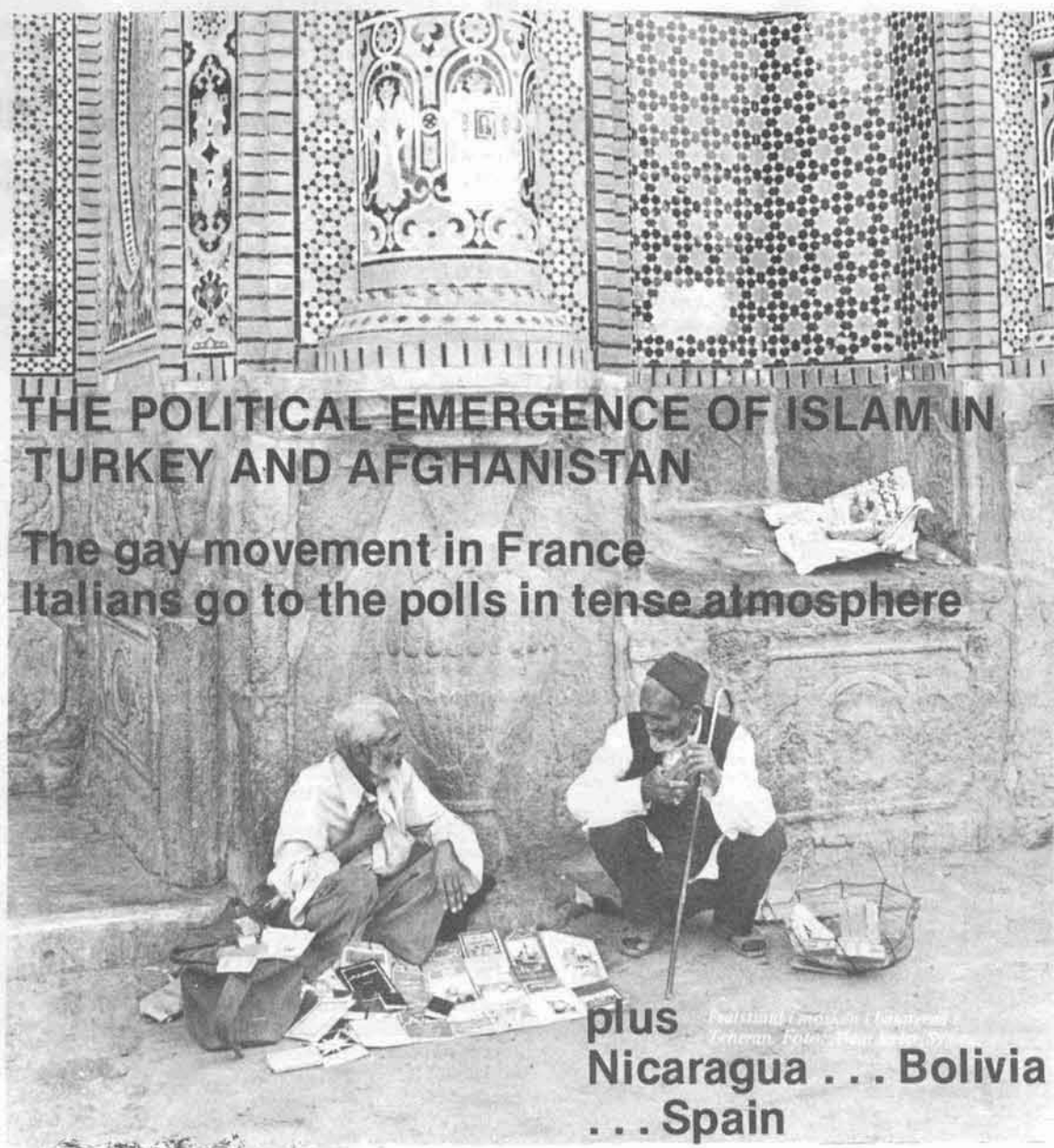


Newsfront International

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**THE POLITICAL EMERGENCE OF ISLAM IN
TURKEY AND AFGHANISTAN**

**The gay movement in France
Italians go to the polls in tense atmosphere**

plus
Nicaragua ... Bolivia
... Spain

The gay movement and the French left

(PTS/Compiled from *Etincelle*, French weekly, April 6, 1979 and *Rouge*, French weekly, April 27, 1979)

At the Third Congress of the Revolutionary Communist League - (LCR) held on January 27-28, 1979, the gay caucus saw the items they had prepared refused inclusion on the agenda by majority vote. Three of the six caucus members resigned from the league in protest, and the two-year-old caucus disbanded. All six joined with other independent gay activists to start a new gay publication, "Masks" (*Masques*), which came out in May. The following excerpts are compiled from recent interviews the collective gave to *Rouge*, party organ of the LCR and *Etincelle*, another extra-parliamentary left paper.

Q: What are your goals in publishing *Masques*?

A: Jean-Pierre: We want *Masks* to be a forum where we can speak out, and reflect on and assert our identities as homosexuals. *Masks* will be an expression of our view of the world, since our identity is not defined just by our sexuality, but more so by the fact that our relationship to the world is different.

Patrice: We do not believe that there is only one kind of homosexuality.

Jean-Pierre: We are interested in expressing the diversities of homosexuality which include, but are not confined to, differences in sex. *Masks* will also be a place where political questions will be raised. We will take a critical look at the workers' organizations and the place that we, as gay men and lesbians, have in their plans for a new society.

Q: There are only four women in the collective. How do you as lesbians see your work with *Masks*? Isn't working in a mixed collective somewhat contradictory with developments in the women's movement?

A: Suzette: There were only a few women in the gay caucus, too, but we're counting on having more of us working on future issues. The women's movement in France has never taken into account the existence of lesbians; there have been no discussions on, or mobilization around, gay issues. We explained this in our feature on "Lesbians and the Women's Movement" in the first issue of *Masks*, and it is the reason why we see the need to increase the number of specifically lesbian groups. However, we are convinced that there is a lot that can be worked out in a mixed group, even with respect to our daily lives. Concretely, this might mean articles written together that give our diverging points of view. But we do plan to work as an autonomous group within the collective. This might be a source of conflict, but we feel that it is a workable situation, given the aims of the magazine. Besides, this will be the first time that a gay publication is really mixed.

Q: What is your relationship to the gay movement?

A: Alain: We believe in the need for a gay movement, and see ourselves as being part of that movement. But we lay no claim to being representative of the movement; we aren't a movement magazine, nor are we the mouthpiece of a particular political tendency.

Jean-Pierre: We do feel that the recent increase in gay publications is very positive.

Q: Why did you leave the League?

A: The reason is simple - we were reduced to silence. What happened at the Congress showed very clearly that as far as the League was concerned, the gay struggle is secondary. Obviously, when you're gay, you don't consider your struggle to be secondary. What we were protesting - and this holds true for all political organizations - is the fact that the left and the far left reduce socialism solely to changing the production rela-

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tions, and all the rest is supposed to fall automatically into place afterward. The collective, as a whole, believes socialism to be the necessary condition for homosexual liberation, but in itself, it's not enough. And we hope, with Masks, to contribute, in however a small a way, to the broadening of the socialist struggle.

Q: In the present period of intense social struggles, where do you see the gay movement fit in?

A: Alain: An important aspect of the gay movement is that there is no separation of the personal and the political, and we feel that political and union movements can learn from this. Holding a gay rap group, or even a dance, or just gay or lesbian couples being out in public, are all political acts. And in the light of the violent reactions we have met with from the left and the far left, it is clear that we are talking about a political act that is both disturbing and provocative. From there, the question of convergence with other social struggles can be seen differently; we have much in common with women, and also with other movements that are based on the daily lives of people, such as some of the regional struggles, or those of immigrant workers. Unfortunately, the latter two are still heavily biased by "heterosexism."

Q: You haven't mentioned the working class. . .

A: Alain: I don't think that was by chance. I think it is difficult to talk of the working class outside of its organizations. There is no particular problem when it comes to individual workers, but once in a union contingent, they're subject to group pressure, and that group is clearly structured by certain ideologies. The gay movement can perhaps make it clear that homosexuality is neither the product of the middle-class, nor a middle-class deviation, a vice inherent in a decadent bourgeoisie, but that it exists in the working class, too. And a way of doing this is to mobilize around cases of repression, and God knows there are enough of them. This has already been done in some factories and offices, to try to show how it should be the responsibility of the union movement to take up the issue of gay repression, and also, how "accusations" of homosexuality are used as ways of getting rid of union activists. One of the things we are doing is to question the very way that political organizations function as being vehicles of our oppression. Women, who began doing this long before us, are clearly concerned directly. But these questions are also relevant to men - what kind of organizations are they, these organizations for the liberation of man, that reproduce within themselves the structures of oppression? This problem concerns everyone who is involved in working toward a different society - a socialist society that we know will have a whole series of oppressed minorities from the outset.

Q: You equate oppression in a socialist society with oppression in a communist organization, which you define as an "organization for the liberation of man." Do you believe that a communist organization can exist as an island outside of the dominant relations of present society?

A: Alain: It's possible to find ways to combat this oppression. But the political organizations generally do just the opposite. Their line is that there is one primary struggle, and then there are the secondary struggles, and in the name of these priorities, all those who are not French heterosexual males are systematically oppressed.

Jean-Pierre: The left and far-left organizations have never taken action when it comes to gay oppression. Some examples; when the gay festival in Paris was attacked by fascists, and the gays were arrested; or when teachers are fired for homosexuality or for alleged relationships with minors.

Q: You seem to lump all "workers' organizations", as you call them, together, whether they are left or far left. Do you see an organization like the LCR, which was one of the first to take up the issue of the specific oppression of homosexuals, as being on a par with the Communist Party, for example?

A: Alain: It's true that there is a difference in the kind of oppression where, on the one hand, certain left and far-left groups call us degenerates and beat us up, which is a very narrow and brutal form of oppression, and the more subtle, but perhaps even more dangerous form found in organizations that take liberal stands, that affirm in their meetings that homosexuality is not a disease, that it is not scandalous, that gays are oppressed, but who continue, within their ranks, to see gays as inferior beings who have to wait, either until the elections have been won or the revolution accomplished, in order to exist.

Jean-Pierre: What's more, it is not the organizations like the LCR that took up the issue of homosexuality, but the gays themselves who, from within the organization, made it into an issue.

Suzette: The analysis that we, as lesbians, will develop of our oppression and of our different relationship to the world, can only be of benefit to political organizations and the women's movement. The magazine, and the stormy discussions that it will most likely provoke, will perhaps provide a basis for more concrete exchanges than we were able to achieve with just having a gay caucus. I would like all politically concerned people to read Masks, and see that it is read by others, and that everyone, both men and women, feel as concerned by the questions that we are raising as they are by those raised by the women's movement.

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Left unity efforts fail on eve of Italian elections

(PTS/ Compiled from *il manifesto*, Italian daily, April and May, 1979)

"For our proposal to work, the various parties would have had to criticize themselves instead of just criticizing each other. Unfortunately, the desire to do this was missing."

Those are the words of Luigi Bobbio, one of the organizers of an attempt to unify all the Italian "new left" groups and parties under a single electoral banner for the Italian Parliamentary elections of June 3 and 4. The impetus for this at-

tempt at electoral unification was supplied by the "Group of 61," a group of trade unionists, intellectuals, progressive judges, and others who fear that electoral disunity will spell disaster for the "new left." (For a partial text of this group's initial position paper, see *Newsfront International* #225) The increasing political differences within the "new left", which have become more pronounced since the failure of their electoral coalition in 1976, simply proved too great to overcome in the short period of time remaining before the elections.

Because even a basic agreement on these issues could not be reached by the major forces in the "new left," in most areas there will be two and



PTS/L'Espresso

As unemployment grows in Italy, unemployed workers constitute a powerful political force

sometimes three different electoral slates on the ballot representing the groups and parties who are to the left of the PCI. For a while, it appeared as if agreement had been reached on presenting a common slate. Until April 22, all of the major groups and parties in the "new left" had tentatively agreed to band together for the elections, but many began to have second thoughts as to the political viability of glossing over serious differences in order to win an election.

There are three main dividing lines within the "new left." The first involves disagreement over an analysis of political violence/terrorism; the second point of discord crops up when discussing what relationship the "new left" should have to the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and its strategy of an "historic compromise" government with the ruling Christian Democrats (DC); and the third is disagreement over how to relate to mass movements which have sprung up in Italy and remained

The elections, which are being held more than two years ahead of schedule because the Parliament elected in 1976 could not sustain a working government coalition, are crucial for the PCI. Since the 1976 elections, when they pulled almost even with the DC electorally (getting 34% of the vote to the DC's 38%), the electoral strength of the West's largest Marxist party has been slipping. In a number of small local elections since 1976, the Party has not fared so well, and the elections of June 3 and 4 will give voters nationwide the opportunity to express their opinion of

PCI strategy since the 1976 elections. This strategy has included repeated calls for a government of national unity -- which would be made up of all of Italy's non-Fascist parties -- to see Italy through the economic and social crisis of recent years which many observers believe is threatening the very existence of the Italian Republic. The PCI has called for a hard-line attitude towards political violence and supports the austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund in an attempt to prop up the fragile Italian economy.

The Italian Socialist Party (PSI), once very influential, received a shockingly low 9% of the vote in the 1976 Parliamentary elections, but there are indications that the Party will do better this time around. The PSI has been courting militants disenchanted with the "new left" (*See Newsfront International #223*), which is a good indication that the PSI will resist any DC attempts to resurrect the "center-left" coalition government of the DC and PSI which was so popular in the early 1960's. Relations between the PSI and PCI remain somewhat strained, however, and the PSI hopes for a larger share of the left votes in the upcoming elections in order to gain some leverage in their dealings with the Communists.

The Radical Party (PR), which concentrates on civil rights and has a strong libertarian streak, is also expected to do fairly well. The PR hopes

to pick up votes from leftists who are critical of both the PCI and the various "new left" electoral coalitions, although in about half of Italy the Radicals are presenting a common slate for the Senate with one of the "new left" coalitions. (The Senate is traditionally more conservative than the Chamber of Deputies, owing to the fact that voters must be 25 to vote for the Senate -- as opposed to 18 for the Chamber -- and that some Senate seats are appointed for life.)

The Italian feminist movement has sponsored a number of debates on the elections, but there is no unified line within the movement. The Radicals, who have long been at the forefront of the struggle for abortion rights, are expected to get a large share of the feminist vote. There had been some talk of a women's slate being presented in some major cities, but nothing came of this proposal.

Finally, as in any Italian election, a number of world-famous cultural figures will be running.

Among them are Leonardo Sciascia, an author known for his novels about life in his native Sicily, who ran as an independent on the PCI slate in 1976 and is running on the Radical slate this time, and director Ettore Scola (*We All Loved Each Other So Much, A Special Day*) who is running as an independent on the PCI slate. Nobel Prize poet Eugenio Montale is a Senator for life, representing the small, moderate Republican Party.



PIS/Maintenant

A look inside a local headquarters of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The Italian Parliamentary elections scheduled for June 3 and 4 will be very crucial ones for the PCI, whose popularity has been slipping since the last such elections in 1976.

Search for Red Brigades becomes witch-hunt in Italy

(PTS/Compiled from *il manifesto*, Italian daily, April 6 through May 4, 1979)

In the name of "counter-terrorism", police throughout Italy have seized upon the electoral campaign (see related article) as an opportunity to launch an offensive against independent political groups on the left.

The object of the campaign has mostly been the so-called "Autonomia," the political associations of workers, students and unemployed, operating outside Italy's huge Communist Party (PCI) and the various "extra-parliamentary" parties to the left of the PCI. These groups have argued for workers' struggle at the community and workplace level, stressing the need for autonomous organizations to effect any real social change in the current political climate in Italy. As such, they are perceived as a threat to the economic austerity of the Christian Democrats (DC) and to the working class support of the PCI. Their relations, even with the extra-parliamentary left, are often strained because of their refusal to condemn violence.

The most significant case of this police policy has been the arrest of Antonio Negri and fourteen other members of the group "Workers' Power" in Padua last April 6. Negri, a professor at the University in Padua, has long been a prominent leader in the *Autonomia*, and his arrest commanded headlines for several weeks in the Italian press.

Negri was accused of being a leader of the Red Brigades (BR) and of having masterminded last year's kidnapping and assassination of DC President Aldo Moro. During the course of his inter-

rogation, numerous other arrests took place, including several journalists, prompting a strong reaction not only within left circles, but within the press as well.

There appears to be no real case against Negri and his companions. The only substantive evidence against him was that excerpts from his writings appeared in messages from the BR. Negri was held in solitary confinement for the two weeks of his interrogation, during which time the prosecutors consistently hinted of a "super-witness" who would emerge in the proceedings. The "super-witness" never materialized. Indeed, at the end of the interrogations, Negri's own lawyers reacted with astonishment at the weakness of the prosecution's case. Much had been made of a tape recording of a BR phone call to Aldo Moro's house on April 30, 1978, in which the caller's voice was alleged to be Negri's. By the end of the proceeding it had been established that the call had been made from the Stazione Termini railroad depot in Rome, while it was shown that Negri was in Milan on that date.

By April 21, *il manifesto* concluded, "We find ourselves faced with a witch-hunt, a widespread intimidation against anyone who has criticized, or criticizes, the magistrate...At the very least, we are dealing with a pure case of hysteria."

Despite the government's embarrassment over the Negri case, there appears to be little abatement in the policy of repression. The theory that there is a conspiracy on the left, headed by the BR, to subvert Italian democracy, has not been abandoned. By mid-May, the Italian Army was included in the "fight" against terrorism, an unprecedented move in a country where local and national police have long jealously guarded their own preserves.

Spain: Left coalitions gain control in major cities

(PTS/ Translated from *Triunfo*, Spanish weekly, April 21, 1979)

Municipal elections held April 1 throughout Spain led to a clear leftist victory. Shortly thereafter, representatives of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) agreed to cooperate in the formation of municipal governments in order to ensure the elections of leftist mayors by the councillors chosen by the voters. Both parties emphasized that this step would not be followed by the elaboration of a common program nor would it lead to the creation of a second Popular Front, although ongoing cooperation in these municipalities has been promised by both groups. The outcome of this agreement has been the capture of the bulk of the country's municipal governments by the left. Excerpts from two *Triunfo* articles discuss the impact of this on Spanish politics as well as attempts by the conservative governing party, the Union of the Democratic Center (UCD), to disrupt this unity.

The Left's Battle

There seem to be three distinct powers now in Spain. One controls the non-governmental posts and represents a non-democratic conservatism which is trying to maintain what the government of General Franco represented, although by other means. Another power is the government itself, based on a party (UCD) which is in reality no more than the confluence of various groups and individuals. This party's force resides in an insufficiently clear, relative electoral majority obtained under an undemocratic electoral law. The third power is just being formed: the municipal left. Its sudden appearance has upset the other two. The municipal left has the 1800 most important municipal governments in the country, containing 70% of the country's population, as well as the 18 or 20 most important cities, including Madrid and Barcelona. Its weakness lies in its having won these elections without having presented a united front. This left is

trying to achieve unity after the fact through negotiations between two parties (PSOE and PCE) which have been hostile to one another throughout most of their history. Furthermore, since their leaders have no interest in formulating a common program, the agreements are purely tactical.

In capturing one of Spain's most important bases of power, the task which faces the municipal left is immense. The former regime used the municipal governments as a base of operations, placing their most reliable people in them. Upon taking up municipal power, the left will be confronted with the necessity of a systematic renovation which will extend from the superficial - but possibly provocative - act of changing street names to the alteration of the props of its authority and budget: contracts, land, communal exploitation, urbanization, housing, culture. In addition, there is a political task of the first order - local government's support for autonomous forms where nationalist parties are represented and where the left's plan to decentralize the government can advance. In this the left is going to encounter frontal assaults by the two existing centralist powers.

Twenty-four hours after the municipal agreement of the left (joined by some nationalist and democratic forces) was made public, the governmental party, the UCD, attempted to break it with antagonistic proposals made to the leadership of both the PSOE and the PCE. Denounced by both parties, this move is the end result of fifteen days of vigorous maneuvering by the neo-Francoists to

dissolve the unity of the left and maintain their political continuity as well as their control of the greatest number of Mayoralities. This first political assault on Socialist-Communist unity was a complete government defeat in its primary object - the separation of the PSOE and the PCE. However, in another respect it met with greater success: it led to a limitation of the support of the Catalan Socialists for the *Convergencia de Catalunya* to a specified time and level.

The possibility of UCD cooperation with the Left parties seemed to depend on the behavior of its moderate right. Only when they approached a social democratic program did a center-left, or coalition policy, appear possible. Government attempts were bound to fail when the right isolated itself in policies of neo-Francoist integralism. This is especially true in the municipalities, to which the Socialist-Communist pact is limited, since neo-Francoist tendencies are far more pronounced at this level.

By late May, it had become clear that the Left was experiencing its own internal problems. Militants within the PSOE, objecting to the Party's middle-of-the-road policies and top-down leadership, led to the resignation of PSOE leader Felipe Gonzales. While it is expected that he will return to the head of the Party by the November Party Congress, the move is bound to have significant, if as yet unknown, effects on the relations between the PSOE and the PCE, as well as between the PSOE and the centrist powers.

Fascist violence on the upswing in Spain

(PTS/Translated from *Triunfo*, Spanish weekly, April 7, 1979)

On the eve of legislative elections in Spain, numerous fascist attacks were instigated against such groups as the PSOE (Socialist Workers' Party) and the PCE (Communist Party). The perpetrators almost always escaped. The following accounts are specific incidents of this terrorist activity.

The crowd was, for the most part, old enough to remember. On the screen, Jose Luis de Vilallonga was reviving old memories of the civil war, when suddenly, the film was interrupted by the shouts of a group of youths: "That's a lie!" They began throwing eggs at the screen, possibly with the illusion of injuring those remembered, as if the image were a real, living presence. Some ripped the white synthetic fabric, while others warned the public, frightened and quiet in their seats, that this was not directed at them and that no one needed to be frightened. For the next few minutes, the ultra-rightist commando shouted Falangist slogans, threw ashtrays at the screen, pulled out seats and smeared the walls with their party initials: F.E.S (Syndicalist Student Front).

The local theater was left very seriously damaged. During the rest of the day and the following night, forty people worked continuously to repair it. The next day, the public turned out in greater numbers than before. "Instead of hurting the film, what they have done is to promote it, because now many more people are coming." The police called the cinema's employees for a statement, but did not allow them to speak to reporters.

Against the Left

Tuesday, March 27, around 6 p.m. Two boys, about 15 years old, entered the office of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) Eastern bureau, where Communist Youth members were developing photographs. The two boys, made up like guerrillas, asked to see some propaganda. Edging toward the door, they tore up the papers and shouted: "Reds! Fools!", then turned and ran off. Around 7:30 p.m., they returned to the office and repeated the insults. Normal activity continued. "We did not let ourselves be provoked, because that is what they were looking for."



PTS/Mundo Obrero

Fascist assembly in Madrid

Later in the evening, five youths approached the door and demanded to see the person in charge. The leader of the five, according to witnesses, was no older than twenty and the others were even younger. All wore the insignia of the national flag on their lapels. All hid their right hand inside their clothing. The leader of the commando insisted upon entering, but the communists refused them entrance. Some of the communists inside wanted a face-to-face talk with the youths; others wanted to send them off as before. Tension was mounting.

"Load your guns," shouted the leader. Meanwhile, two of them had seized a communist by the lapels and shaken him. "If they try anything," the leader ordered, "draw your guns and give them four shots." The communists finally succeeded in throwing the "guerrillas" out of the office. As they left, the fascists hit anyone in their path with iron bars and chains, while shouting "Long Live Christ the King!" and "Up with Spain!" From a distance, they continued to hurl bottles and jars against the PCE office door. Two communists and one passer-by were wounded.

The office, since its opening in September 1976 when the party was still illegal, had been attacked two other times: once on the eve of the elections on June 15, 1977 and again on the eve of the so-called constitutional referendum. "We communists consider these attacks to be a form of terrorism, which must be combatted. We will use all our strength, in the party as well as among the people, to see that the authorities apply the anti-terrorist law."

The Attacks Continue

Friday, March 30, exactly 3 a.m. Two labor lawyers had just arrived at the offices of the Workers' Commission (C.C.O.O.) to retrieve some briefs they needed for various trials that same day in the Labor Court, when they heard an enormous explosion. They stood trembling for a while, then went downstairs where they met two security men as shaken up as they. Police and bomb experts were called in who, after checking for more bombs, figured at least two kilos of explosives had gone off. However, they found no evidence of a timing device. If the terrorists only wanted the usual explosion, why did they bring enough dynamite to blow up the whole building? Some think that had been their purpose, but that upon seeing a light and movement unusual for that hour, the criminals had decided to place the charge somewhere else and escape. In any event, the assault has been claimed by a terrorist group called GRAPO.

The same group had claimed another assault on C.C.O.O. the previous Saturday. In protest of this assault, there were numerous work stoppages and demonstrations in the Catalonia region. In Madrid, the same Friday of the explosion, some 3,000 people, called together by the C.C.O.O. and the U.G.T. (a Socialist Worker's Union), gathered in front of the C.C.O.O.'s office. "Where is a GRAPO fascist?" one old worker raged. "I'll cut off his balls!" That same day in Leon, in the northwest of Spain, the office of the Union of the Democratic Center (UCD) was attacked. The aggressors were identified as militants of *Fuerza Nueva* (New Force), an extreme right group. They destroyed the archives, shouted the usual hackneyed slogans, and sneaked away.....

(PTS/Translated from *Triunfo*, Spanish weekly, April 21, 1979)

The first week of April began and ended in Euzkadi with huge demonstrations. On the 8th, 100,000 people demonstrated in Bilbao against police repression in the Basque Country. On the previous Sunday, Aberri Eguna - the Basque National Day - close to 200,000 people, distributed between Bilbao, San Sebastian, Vitoria, Pamplona and Mauleon, a Basque provincial capital in France, paraded through the streets to express what each of the political parties involved considers to be the solution to the Basque situation.

Well underway by noon, the demonstrations on April 1 attracted a far greater turnout than had been expected. The increasing rain seems not to have diminished attendance at all. It quickly became clear that, for the first time in the history of this celebration, the number of Basque

White flight: Southern Africans look to Bolivia

PTS/A.L.A.I., 12 April 1979

"A new Rhodesia is at this moment being constructed in the Bolivian province of Beni. Extensive lands are being bought up by SEFA S.A. -- a company led by the illegal government of Ian Smith." This is the report of two Swedish journalists who say they have talked with one of the unnamed executives of the mysterious Rhodesian company.

"When we lose power in Rhodesia," he said, "the great exodus will begin. In anticipation of that situation, we are preparing ourselves by buying extensive lands in Bolivia. We have concentrated on buying up the province of Beni, which has an area of 113,000 square kilometers. We have chosen Bolivia because it is the poorest country in Latin America. In some ways the province of Beni is the equivalent of Rhodesia fifty years ago."

"Here are all the conditions for a settlement of white Rhodesians, with their know-how and their modern equipment, to create a modern and prosperous society. Naturally, we will utilize the Indians as cheap labor; they too will enjoy, to a certain degree, the prosperity which we create."

He also indicated that while the Rhodesian government alone cannot sustain the land-buying scheme, it remains realistic due to the aid of governments and loans from international banks.

The colonization plan began with the November 1976 meeting of government representatives of Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela

and the West German Ministry of Development Aid. Although the official subject of the meeting was the transfer of Latin American technicians completing their studies in Europe back to their own countries, also discussed was a West German offer of \$150 million to any country ready to receive thirty thousand German families from Southern Africa.

The revelation of this offer shocked the normally tight-lipped Intergovernmental Commission of European Migration (CIME). Mrs. Brutel de la Riviere, advisor to the Dutch delegation of CIME, considered the negotiations shaky, yet affirmed that "various South American countries watch the arrival of technicians and specialists from South Africa with interest." Those forced to leave the African continent would prefer South America, provided there is enough room for them." This involves not only the whites of South Africa, but those of Rhodesia and Namibia, as well. Mrs. de la Riviere also confirmed that Rhodesians in search of land prospects have travelled to South America, particularly to Bolivia.

The countries most affected by the exodus from Southern Africa, especially England and Holland, are barely holding their own economically. Not having much to offer the ex-settlers, they are more than glad to encourage migration to other areas.

TURKEY, continued from page 11

istration to implement austerity measures which are daily becoming more unpopular, in order to attain the economic stability necessary for Turkey to participate more fully in the European economy. Negotiations regarding Turkey's possible future entry into the European Common Market have been going on for years without success. In the countryside, in the most underdeveloped areas of Turkey, the response to Ecevit's policies has been, for the government, alarming: a spiritual renaissance has been growing in response to the sacrifices imposed by the economic crisis.

The return of Islam, which for sixty years has been relegated to a subsistence in half-empty mosques on the fringes of secular society, has matched step-by-step the Khomeini flame in Iran. The leaders, however, are of a totally different political stamp than Khomeini. Only very recently have there been some small signs of an "Islamic left," and this is limited to the cities; in the countryside, the movement is led by fanatics, tied both to fascism and ultra-nationalism, which were used by past governments to fight the union and left movements.

Turkey, then, may be exploding, but the impetus supplied by the Islamic right is not what Hani



el-Hassan was hoping for when he spoke of Turkish upheaval three months ago. How is the U.S. reacting? Washington has traditionally favored the activities of the Turkish right, which it has considered a more dependable ally than Ecevit. Now, however, the situation appears to be different. Afraid that the destabilization of Turkish society might drive Ecevit into the Soviet camp, Washington has worked on improving relations between the two governments, so that now it can be said that Turkish-U.S. relations are better than they have been in years.

Morocco and the Polisario Front

(PTS/Translated from *Rouge*, French weekly, April 27 - May 3, 1979)

In 1975, Spain relinquished its former North African colony of the Spanish Sahara, turning over administrative control, not to the indigenous population, but to Morocco and Mauritania. Since then, the Polisario Front (the national independence movement) has been carrying out a prolonged guerrilla war with the Moroccan and Mauritanian troops which have occupied most of the country. However, Mauritania announced in April that it would meet with the Polisario Front on May 26 to sign a peace treaty in preparation for a complete pullout of its troops from Western Sahara.

sity. The predicament of King Hassan II is certainly not as serious as that of his friend Shah Reza Pahlavi, whom he graciously received during the first weeks of his exile; however, the throne of the king is also crumbling.

Since last summer, when the Polisario declared a ceasefire with Mauritania (a ceasefire which has been tacitly observed by Mauritanian forces as well), the Saharan troops have concentrated all their attacks against the Royal Armed Forces and have dealt them increasingly stinging defeats. A particular cause for alarm was the Polisario attack last January 28 on the Moroccan city of Tan-Tan. Twelve hundred men, fully armed, were able to attack their objective, a city of 35,000 inhabitants, at 1:00 p.m. and occupy it for four

PTS/Maintenant



In progress since the beginning of April, the latest thrust of the "Boumedienne offensive" (begun in January as a full-scale offensive against Moroccan occupation and named after the late President of Algeria who supported the independence struggle of the Polisario Front) seems at this moment to be very much of a success. Polisario forces succeeded in liberating two key Saharan towns, Tifariti (in the northeast) and Amgala, as well as launching a full-scale attack on Bu-Craa, center of the country's phosphate deposits. They also attacked and temporarily occupied the southern Moroccan town of Aguinet-Torkos, while, at the same time, attacking with heavy arms Morocco's four main military garrisons, both in the Western Sahara and inside Morocco. During these attacks, heavy losses were inflicted upon the Moroccan troops of King Hassan's Royal Armed Forces.

These recent military setbacks, which visibly worry the West, have occurred at a particularly poor time for the weakened Hassan regime. In the course of the last few months, the economic and social conditions in the country have deteriorated considerably. Beginning last summer, a wave of strikes has swept the country, affecting most sectors of the economy. Recently, the strikes have spread to the high schools and the univer-

hours, after having covered 450 kilometers (280 miles) of Moroccan territory. Defeats such as these have seriously lowered the morale of the Moroccan army, an army which consumes 45% of the national budget. Numbering more than 60,000 men at the outset of the conflict, today it consists of 120,000, and its budget of five million dirams (approximately 1 million dollars) in 1970 has now surpassed four billion dirams (approximately 840 million dollars).

The Saharan Burden

Nevertheless, the Hassan regime continues to strive for a Saharan victory and defend its policies there in the name of "the sacred union," this being its only remaining defense against its "opposition" parties as well as with its working-class and rural populations, which is taking a beating from the negligence of its administration. But times change. Although the bellicose tone continues to prevail, the euphoria of the time of the "green march" of 1975 has reversed itself, and now many are speaking of the Saharan booby-trap. The "green march" of November, 1975, was a national mobilization of 350,000 "peace marchers" called together by King Hassan in the name of Morocco's "sacred union" with the terri-

tory of Western Sahara. They were trucked to the border and allowed to march several miles into Western Sahara in order to "confront" Spanish troops and lend legitimacy to Morocco's territorial claims to the region.

The reason for this gradual reversal of opinion can be seen if one takes into account the profundity of the present economic crisis. The phosphate boom, which is the country's principal form of wealth, has disappeared. Going from 13 dollars a ton before January 1974 to 68 dollars in January 1975, it has gone back down to 30 dollars a ton today. During the period of the phosphate boom, a mood of euphoria prevailed and investments increased from 1.2 billion dirhams in 1973 to 10.2 billion in 1977, reaching 40% of the gross national product. But, although the economy gave the impression of doing well, in fact during this same period of time the national treasury was going into an increasing deficit.

Another problem is inflation; Since the summer of 1977, it has begun to increase regularly, induced by the importation of gasoline and manufactured products. Since then, it has maintained a rate of 15%. Those who foot the bill are the rural workers in particular (where the daily salary fluctuates around seven dirhams (or \$1.50)), as well as the urban workers, and the population in general which sees the price of housing, transportation and basic necessities rising. A simple calculation shows, for example, that for a Moroccan worker one hour of work earns enough for one loaf of bread, one and one-half hours work for one kilo of sugar, and eleven hours for a kilo of beef.

Thus, inflation has brought about a significant drop in the standard of living for the majority of the population. Nevertheless, a surprising disparity exists between salaries: although the minimum monthly wage, one of the lowest in the world, does not exceed five hundred dirhams (\$105.00), a president or managing director usually receives 30,000 dirhams monthly (\$6,300.00). Along with this, there is the black market, the reign of speculation and the tradition of begging which serve to aggravate the economic malaise even more. In addition, unemployment is endemic (two million people) and the treasury has a huge deficit. While nonexistent in 1973, the treasury deficit has passed successively from 3.5 billion in 1975 to 7.4 in 1976, and 7.7 in 1977.

A Series of Strikes

In this context, during the summer of 1978, a series of strikes took place. These were the first shocks which jolted the collaborating political groups. Even more serious is the split in the traditional Moroccan Workers' Union (UMT) which is the main union political arm of the regime. In November, many groups separated from it (post office and telephone workers, railway workers, miners and teachers) and created the Democratic Confederation of Labor. At the outset of

1979, the movement picked up momentum with another wave of strikes. These included a strike of 10,000 railway workers for higher wages; 17,000 bank employees occupied 300 branches of 15 different banking firms; a strike of 10,000 miners from Khourigba; as well as actions taken by hospital, postal, aviation, textile and dock workers.

In February, the national education system had two general strikes of three to four days, initiating its participation in the movement. This marked the crossing of a new threshold for the workers' movement. While the striking teachers at Rabat, Casablanca, Kuneitra and Marrakesh based their movement on salary disputes, they also protected, more or less overtly, the problems of the unrelenting repression, the regime's pseudo-liberalization, and the plight of political prisoners.

The teachers and students, both college and high school, decided on nonviolent strikes in order to protest against the requirements for the baccalaureate (high school diploma), the selection process, their material situation, and the imprisonment of other students and teachers. The government's reaction was equal to that of their defiance. Since their first assault on a striking high school on March 9, police have forced their way into the classrooms with unbelievable savagery. They quelled demonstrations which took place in the cities on March 10 and 11 in a similar fashion. There have been night arrests, sealed coffins returned to families, and so many wounded that hospitals find themselves short on plaster for broken bones. Although this is all based on well-known facts, it goes unreported in the press.

The Iranian Example

The nomination of Bouabid as the new Prime Minister - an ex-member of the opposition party, National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP), and directly linked to the leaders of the UMT - has had the goal of releasing some of the opposition pressure and especially obtaining a certain social consensus at the union level. This maneuver has been reinforced by the creation of a National Security Council on March 27. With the support of this council of war, supported by the Socialist Union of Progressive Forces (USFP), the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS), and the National Assembly of Independents, once more the king will be able to defend his internal policies in the name of the national "mobilization" against the Polisario and its supporter, Algeria. But the sovereign no longer has the freedom of movement which he had in 1975 and 1976. The international situation has changed. Under the encouragement of France, Hassan has changed his military and diplomatic alliances in the Maghreb (the North African states), the effect of which has been to isolate him from most of the Arab world. His position on the Israeli-Egyptian treaty in particular, which he at first supported, has further iso-

continued on back page

Women and the European Parliamentary elections

(PTS/ Compiled from *Maintenant*, French weekly, 4/2/79 and *Rouge*, French daily, 3/3/79, 4/5/79).

The first popular elections in the history of the European Parliament will be held on June 10, 1979. The Parliament was founded in 1957 by the Rome Treaties, which established the European Economic Community (Common Market, or CEE) and the European Atomic Energy Community. The Parliament is currently composed of 198 representatives appointed by the nine national Parliaments from among their own members. The Rome Treaty provides for the election of the European Parliament by universal suffrage.

The European Council, inaugurated in December of 1975, signed the final agreement concerning direct elections to the Parliament. The new body will be composed of 410 members: 81 from France, West Germany, Italy and Great Britain; 25 from the Netherlands; 24 from Belgium; 16 from Denmark; 15 from Ireland; and 8 from Luxembourg. In certain countries - Ireland, Great Britain and Italy - the European elections have been overshadowed by national elections.

One hundred thirty million European women make up 52% of the electoral body which will select members to the European Parliament on June 10. Europe has discovered a renewed interest in these prospective voters and has launched a great media campaign in an effort to bring together the women of Europe and to encourage their participation in the upcoming elections. In this campaign, there is particular attention being paid to the question of employment.

In the press, there is a call for strength in unity: "When one woman speaks of equality, they smile. When 100 million women speak of it, they listen." Many papers, on the other hand, are trying to demonstrate the progress made in the struggle for equal rights: "Equal work, equal pay. The principle is admitted. It is even set down in Article 119 of the Rome Treaty (the treaty which established the European Common Market). So, things are already getting better." Curiously enough, Article 119, which still hasn't been put into practice twenty years after its conception, is presented as the spearhead of the feminist battle for equality, although it was adopted as a means to abolish the practice of low pay for women in order to encourage free competition.

Though the countries which make up the Europe of Nine (the European Economic Community) express concern for women's rights, particularly in the area of employment, a service provided by the Commission of European Communities (CEE), called Women's Employment, has established statistics which often contradict the stated policies of these countries.

According to the document of the CCE, 40 million women in the Common Market countries work; that figure represents 44% of women between the ages of 14 and 59. In these countries, the proportion of working women has gone up despite the economic crisis and the incitements to stay or return to the home. However, according to the report, "the proportion of unemployed women has gone up even more rapidly." The study's figures show that 2,611,000 women, or one out of every fifteen working women, are unemployed.

These figures are underestimated, and the Women's Employment Service attributes this to several factors: "The importance, in certain countries, of part-time work which can be a form of hidden unemployment; the discrimination against women in terms of unemployment compensation; and the limited number of job openings really accessible to women." Despite these gaps in the statistics, the number of unemployed women in 1977 never dipped below 6.2%, and between August 1977 and August 1978, this figure went up to 11%.

Adding to the problems caused by rising unemployment are those resulting from the increasing number of women entering the working world. "With the number of women working on the rise, there is a corresponding growing need to develop certain social services, especially that of child-care." Many of the European countries have responded to this need by promoting part-time work for women, with the result that 23.6% of employed women (as compared to a 1.9% rate for men) work less than forty hours. The report points out that "...part-time work isn't always a deliberate choice...To consider part-time work as a way for women to reconcile their occupational and family-related activities points out two weaknesses in the societies under study; the insufficiency of social services and the absence of shared family responsibilities by men."

Women's Employment found that women are distributed in three main sectors of the economy: 7.1% in agriculture, 28.1% in industry and 64.8% in service. In the industries, women are limited to a few areas — textiles, electronic equipment, clothing — which are most affected by the economic crisis and competition. In addition, they occupy positions requiring the least qualifications and make up half of the assembly line workers. In the service sector, women are limited to commerce and distribution, health, teaching and office work.

In view of these observations offered by Women's Employment, the three general plans adopted by the Council of Europe seem inadequate. They concern equal pay for both sexes (with the possibility of appeals in individual cases of discrimination); equal treatment of men and women in terms of job access, promotion, working conditions; and, finally, the movement towards equal social security benefits.

Nationalist Party (PNV - liberal nationalists) supporters was equaled and even supplanted in first place by the followers of Herri Batasuna (a revolutionist electoral coalition which shocked political observers by winning 6 seats in the recent parliamentary elections). Thus, of the 100,000 demonstrators in Bilbao, 45,000 were in the PNV group, some 40,000 in Herri Batasuna's and the remaining 15,000 in others. In this way, Herri Batasuna is at the point of equaling the number of PNVists in Viscaya, the Basque province where the PNV has its greatest strength. In Vitoria the 28,000 participants were in two groups. On the one hand were the PNV, *Euskodiko Esquerra* (a leftist electoral bloc, more moderate than HB), and the ORT (Revolutionary Workers Organization), who marched with slogans supporting the Statute (which gives the Basque country a very limited autonomy, similar to that enjoyed by a U.S. state). Herri Batasuna, the Communist Movement-Organization of the Communist Left (which since have merged) and the Trotskyists formed the Communist Left and the Trotskyists formed another section--more than half of the demonstrators - which called for a more radical solution to the problems of their region. In San Sebastian, Herri Batasuna surpassed the PNV's participation and in Pamplona this coalition made up 90% of the 30,000 demonstrators, thus confirming its character as the primary Navarran nationalist force. Insofar as the Socialist Party and the Communist Party are concerned, there is little to review given the scarce representation of both parties in the demonstrations.



Street fighting in Euskadi

PTS/Triunfo

Elections planned in Bolivia

PTS/Our correspondent

Last year at this time Bolivia was about to elect its first democratic president in 14 years. A year later, preparations are still being made. In many ways the tide of popular protest to dictatorship has been building since the overthrow of populist General Juan Jose Torres in 1971 and the beginning of General Hugo Banzer's "national security state" style of government.

Banzer and his followers in the military and business circles never really had a chance at building a popular base for the military government. The military-peasant pact of 1965, which set up a peasant organization to work with the Minister of Peasant Affairs (always a military officer) was weakening before Torres took power in 1971. Banzer held it together through his reign; but now, under the influence of the *grupo generacional*--the new generation of officers who attended the military academy when it reflected the populist sentiments of the 1952 Revolution--the new militant peasant groups, which work increasingly closely with the miners and urban workers, have discredited the old government-sponsored organizations. With the

demise of the military-peasant pact the far-right is isolated from the people. The left has made a comeback since 1971: military control has loosened somewhat, although troops continue to occupy three large mines; many exiles have returned; and the Mineworkers Union has enjoyed legality for the past 15 months, even the COB (Bolivian Workers Confederation) functions openly.

The military doesn't seem to have enough unity to carry out the kind of heavy repression common to the other "national security states" in the Southern Cone. Repression during the Banzer years took the form of imprisonment, banning of trade union and political leaders, and over 20,000 exiles. Owing to the nationalist sympathies of many of the *grupo generacional* officers, the rift between the Left and the military is not as deep as in neighboring countries. But, let us not forget--the mineworkers won't--the Army's history of massacres in mining districts.

continued on page 19

THE POLITICAL EMERGENCE

Islam and the West on the attack in Afghanistan

(PTS/Translated from *Arbeiterkampf*, German weekly, April 30, 1979)

The fierce dispute that began at the onset of the new year between the Moslem rebels and the Afghani military power has developed into an open civil war.

At the end of March, Western observers reported fighting in more than half of the Afghani provinces, with clashes near the capital, Kabul. The fighting reached its high point with the capture of Herat, the central provincial capital. Only through a greatly increased commitment of troops in conjunction with air attacks did the Afghani government manage to recapture the city. At the present time, the Afghani government is preparing itself for a sharpening of the conflict. The central cities are under military control and the country has been put under *de facto* martial law. The civil government has been eliminated and a type of "emergency junta" has been established.

A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ATTEMPT

During the middle of last year, a revolt by a progressive wing of the Afghani military succeeded in abolishing the country's feudal structure (See *Newsfront International* #220). The beginning of

a land reform program in December of last year evidently gave reactionary religious groups the opportunity to open an attack against the government. In many provinces, the land reform could not be carried out. In others, the plan could only be implemented with the support of the military.

The policies of the new government directly endanger the position of the Islamic clergy. For some time, official Afghani declarations have sharply criticized the Islamic organizations. In addition, Islam as a dominant factor in political life has been more or less eliminated. The Islamic clergy has close ties to the old feudal lords, with the Mullahs often being owners of big estates themselves. Thus, the attack on Islamic holdings became additional reason for the demagogic campaign to establish an Islamic republic.

In December of 1978, the "Jamayat Islami" and the "Hezbi Islami", both secret fascist organizations formed by the estate owners, the Mullahs, and their dependents, took forceful action. Fugitives living in camps in neighboring Pakistan played an important role in the further development of the conflict. According to reports from Western journalists, military training camps under

continued on page 12

PTS/Christian Science Monitor



Mosques such as this are becoming symbols of political power as the influence of Islam spreads.

OF ISLAM

Turkey: NATO's Eastern flank under siege

(PTS/Compiled from *il manifesto*, Italian daily, April 20, 27 and May 1, 1979)

For additional background information, see *Newsfront International* #222, 211 and 204.

Turkey will be the next Middle Eastern country to explode, following the example of Iran; it will become the next bastion of the West and United States to be overturned by popular insurrection. This prediction, made by one of the most knowledgeable exponents of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Hani el-Hassan, is a fairly recent one. It was made three months ago, when, in the aftermath of Khomeini's victory in Iran, Hani el-Hassan became the Palestinian representative in Tehran, working out of the ex-Israeli embassy.

With the Shah gone, the two pivotal points of pro-U.S. forces in the Middle East (outside of Israel) are Egypt and Turkey, two countries where the resurgence of Islam is moving ahead quickly and where secular governments are operating between economic difficulties and the politics of terror. In each country, the regime has at its disposal fewer means than ever to defend itself, and the events in Iran will make themselves felt in an increasingly violent and uncontrollable way. Of the two, Egypt can count on a more efficient internal repression apparatus, and will thus be able to hold out longer than Turkey. This, in a nutshell, is Hani el-Hassan's reasoning.

Now, three months later, the facts seem to bear out this hypothesis. Ankara is in a permanent state of siege, and for some months now Turkey's major cities have been directly under the control of the Army, which has been unable to put a stop to disorders, fights, shoot-outs, and abductions carried out by warring leftist and rightist groups. The victims of terrorism increase by an average of 100 a month; no one is counting any longer. There have been attempts at a *coup d'etat*, and the government has been forced to pass special laws to try to halt the growth of separatist movements in Armenia and Kurdistan. All of Turkey's eastern provinces are practically in a state of permanent war, and the level of repression is growing daily.

On April 27, four months after a state of siege was proclaimed in thirteen provinces following the massacres of Karaman/Maras (See *Newsfront International* #222), the Parliament voted not only to extend this state of siege for two more months, but also to extend it to six additional provinces, mostly inhabited by Kurds, in Eastern Turkey. Now, one-third of the country is under military administration.

The problem is certainly not merely a question of public order. After a fantastic economic boom which lasted until early 1977, in which the country's rate of economic growth reached 7% annually (higher than any other industrialized or semi-industrialized nation in the world), Turkey fell

into economic chaos. The growth rate has slowed to 2.7%, while unemployment has reached 20% and is still increasing. Inflation oscillates between 50 and 70% annually, and the foreign debt is increasing by four billion dollars annually.

Many of the problems now facing the government of social democratic Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit came as a result of the catastrophic errors made by the reactionary Demirel government which was in power until two years ago. To avoid total bankruptcy, Ecevit is looking for help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has imposed its usual monetarist conditions. While Ecevit has preferred to keep many of these conditions secret, the price increases resulting from them are a secret to no one; 90% increase in the cost of gasoline and Diesel fuel, 33% increase for coal, and an average of 30% for foodstuffs.



Turkish children line up outside general store for gasoline.

PTS/Maintenant

Up to this point there has been no popular revolt in the face of these increases because there are soldiers in the streets and because Ecevit, despite everything, is still fairly popular with workers in the large cities, who could bring his government down with massive demonstrations. Under Ecevit, Turkey has emerged from a military dictatorship and won the war for Cyprus; he still enjoys the faith of the people.

But how long can this faith last? The frantic industrial development imposed by Demirel between 1975 and 1977, which has resulted in the current state of recession, inflation and unemployment, is now forcing Ecevit's social democratic admin-

continued on page 13, lower left column

AFGHANISTAN, continued from page 10

Pakistani direction are being built, further strengthening the "Jamayat Islami" and "Hezbi Islami" forces. In February, the various groups in Pakistan formed what is called the "Afghani Freedom Front." Their declared goal is to lead "a holy war against the band of godless Communists" in order to establish an "Islamic republic." (This "Islamic republic" has until now not been clearly defined.)

For some time, the government of Afghanistan has attempted to minimize the extent of the counter-revolution and issued optimistic statements. Meanwhile, they have resorted to military measures for the struggle, rather than relying on a strategy of popular mobilization. In response to the right's subversive activities, practically the entire power of the state has been entrusted to the military. On March 29, a "Supreme Defense Council" was formed. By special decree, this defense council received complete control of the army, responsibility for maintaining "peace and order" as well as extensive administrative tasks. The Defense Council is not subject to any checks and meets only when called by the President. Since the Council has the right to take any measures "necessary", the country is, in effect, under martial law. At present, this involves only the attempt to deal with the right. But with the establishment of a military dictatorship, the progressive elements of the military's previous policy may be very quickly left behind.

In one interview, Afghani President Amin em-

phasized the importance of foreign intervention in the development of the rightist challenge to the regime. According to the President, these attempts at interference, especially from Pakistan and Iran, are designed to move the exposed "Islamic republics" (Saudi Arabia) to intervene.

According to its own statement, the Pakistani military regime supports the insurrectionists in Afghanistan. Pakistani junta chief Ziaul Haq admitted this in an interview with the Saudi Arabian newspaper *Ukas*. The headquarters, propaganda centers, etc., of the "Afghanistan Liberation Front" are found in Pakistan. The Afghani government has publicly accused Pakistan of "participation in a conspiracy against our popular regime." In response to the denials of the Pakistani government, the Afghanistan government declared that in contradiction to "its talk of friendship and good relations, the Pakistan government does not only tolerate the activities of these elements, but supports and encourages them." Ziaul Haq, for his part, called while in Saudi Arabia for "a common political strategy of the Islamic states against any communist influence in their countries," clearly aiming at Afghanistan. It is certainly no accident that the leaders of the "Afghanistan Liberation Front" appeal to "all Islamic states", with the aim of "supporting the struggle...against the government in Kabul."

Undoubtedly, Pakistan is taking upon itself the mission of compelling Afghanistan's reintegration into the imperialist camp. By the same token, it is surely no coincidence that at the end of March France delivered to the Pakistani junta 32 modern Mirage fighter jets; Pakistan has only 20% of the purchase price to pay, the remainder is to be paid as a long term credit. France also delivered a uranium enrichment facility which can easily be employed for production of atomic weapons.

Afghanistan has very close relations with the Soviet Union and, in foreign policy matters, tends to follow their lead. According to official Afghani statements, the U.S.S.R. has

1,100 advisors in the country at the present time (as opposed to 800 from Western countries), but financial assistance is less than that provided by the West. The Soviet Union reacted quickly to the rebellion in Afghanistan - at least in terms of propaganda - and "warned forcefully against foreign interference in the domestic affairs of Afghanistan." At the same time, it sharply condemned armed provocations and conspiracies organized in Pakistan, Iran, and China. So far, this line has been maintained, with attacks on China increasing.

continued on page 17, lower left column



Note to our readers: We'll be taking our annual vacation this month, so *Newsfront International* won't be coming out in July. Look for our next issue in August.

Nicaragua update

(PTS/Compiled from *Latin American Political Report*, British weekly, *Latin American Economic Report*, British weekly, and *Le Monde*, French daily, April 13 and 20, 1979)

What appears to have been a blunder by the by the guerrillas during their recent tactical offensive has led to a clearer definition by the F.S.L.N. (*Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional*-Sandinista National Liberation Front) of its future plan of action. In Esteli, what began as an F.S.L.N. harassment operation against local National Guard positions led to the guerrillas overplaying their hand, a result of the initial ease with which they penetrated the city. Joined by an unexpected popular uprising, the guerrillas then felt obliged to stay on and occupy Esteli, according to Carlos Nunez, a leader in both the Proletarian tendency and the new unified leadership of

all three F.S.L.N. tendencies. (*The Proletarian and Popular War tendencies support a military strategy of prolonged guerilla war while the Terceristas, in the past, have supported a war of uprisings. The three came together under the insurrectionist (Tercerista) strategy due to the masses' propensity toward insurrections; now, it seems, the Frente has tempered that strategy to meet existing conditions.*) When National Guard reinforcements were called in to surround the city, the guerillas were faced with the option of finding a way through the cordon or calling a full-scale national insurrection in support. Given the more sophisticated arms and superior numbers (12,000 compared with approximately 1200 guerillas) of the *Guardia*, they chose the former.

Another F.S.L.N. leader, Daniel Ortega of the Tercerista tendency, warned that "position warfare", i.e. trying to hold a city under siege, such as took place in Esteli is counter-productive. He stressed the need for small-scale, quick attacks, with more highway attacks and recapture of arms; in short, a general war of

attrition on the National Guard.

The guerrillas' regular raids on National Guard posts and patrols over recent months have reached a point where the Guard can no longer maintain 'normal' policing activities. The streets of Managua and the other main urban centers are largely deserted after dark, with the population wary of either being caught in a military skirmish or mugged by criminals.

Robberies of individuals, supermarkets, and banks (often committed by criminals posing as Sandinista guerrillas) have increased since the devaluation of the *cordoba* in April. The 47% devaluation was almost certainly demanded by the International Monetary Fund in granting \$66 million in loans to an economy which even Somoza admits is in crisis.

All this has increased the antipathy of the business sectors, many of whose businesses are in constant danger of robbery or bankruptcy. To this antipathy, the President has replied: "These people have never fully supported my Liberal party, which has always been the supporter of the workers and the masses." The workforce is unlikely to see things in these terms as unemployment begins to bite even harder later this year. Business leaders are meanwhile hoping to cash in on working-class anger and are now discussing a possible repeat of last year's national strikes.



Sandinista guerrilla in Nicaragua

The businessmen of the Broad Opposition Front (FAO) were impelled to consider joining up with the more radical National Patriotic Front (FPN) by the threat to their interests caused by the devaluation. (It was the FAO's failure to get anywhere with Somoza during last year's mediation that led to the creation of the 3,000-member FPN). A crucial point is whether or not the FAO can conquer its fear of the FPN's left-wing orientation and links with the Sandinista guerrillas. The country's business leaders often seem as fearful of the guerrillas as they are of Somoza, a factor which was largely the undoing of the opposition during the ill-fated mediation. The FAO has protested against what they call "a systematic cam-

continued on back page

BOLIVIA, continued from page 9

The "democratic opening" in Bolivia was created by strikes and other actions by the Bolivian working class. In July, 1976 the three largest mines were shut down in a strike which spread to a national level and ended only when troops were stationed in the mines and miners' residential areas. Protest over prisoners taken and workers fired during this period ultimately led to a hunger strike in December, 1977 and an even larger one in January, 1978. Banzer was forced to hold elections in July of 1978. International observers decried massive and blatant fraud in the elections which showed Banzer's choice, ex-security chief, General Juan Pereda, the victor. Pereda yielded to the universal denunciation of the election; when the National Electoral Court cried foul he called for the elections to be annulled. "Acquiescing" to a barracks coup in Santa Cruz, Pereda took over the government three days later.

The *grupo generacional*, following an unsuccessful attempted coup in October, 1978, supported a coup by the current President, General David Padilla, head of an *institucionalista* group within the military who feel the armed forces must get out of government in order to maintain the integrity and the survival of the military. The *institucionalistas* and the *generacionalistas* agree that the far-right, led by Banzer and Pereda, are not adequately defending the national interest against Chile in Bolivia's struggle to regain an outlet to the sea (lost to Chile in the War of the Pacific a hundred years ago) and against Brazil, its gigantic neighbor with "living borders"—forever eating away at Bolivian territory.

Whoever wins the election will have an unenviable job confronting them. Bolivia must use one-third of its foreign exchange earnings to repay foreign debt this year. Total foreign debt was estimated by the finance ministry at the end of 1978 to be \$1.9 billion. Tin, which accounts for most of the country's exports and therefore foreign exchange, is running out; estimates range from 4 to 20 years worth at present extraction rates. The interior ministry is still considering importing white Rhodesians to beat the Brazilians in the race for the fertile valleys of Bolivia's vast—and unsettled—Northeast.

The three main contenders in the election will be almost the same as last July. Banzer, who has more popular appeal than Pereda, will represent the far-right; Victor Paz Estenssoro, ex-president and leader of the MNR revolution in 1952, has made his peace with the U.S. and some of the rightwing military and business leaders and will represent the center-right; and Hernan Siles Zuazo, also an ex-president will represent the center-left. Most observers agree that it was Siles who actually won last year's election. His team is more divided than before but still strong. The Tupaj Katari In-

dian Movement will run its own candidates, draw some support from Siles. Paz seems stronger than before, taking some strength from his right by running a Christian Democrat as his vice-presidential candidate. Surprisingly, Paz has the support of Juan Lechin's PRIN (National Revolutionary Leftist Party), a small "far-left" party. Lechin followed the Maoist Communist Party into Paz's camp; the Maoists support Paz in what they see as an "anti-hegemonist" coalition against Siles' ticket which is supported by the pro-Soviet Communist Party. (Paz, Siles and Lechin have known each other a long time; Siles led the workers militia in La Paz and Lechin, the miners' militia in Oruro, in 1952, when they defeated the Bolivian Army and brought Paz to power.) In the recent conference of the COB, the UDP (Democratic Popular Unity), Siles' coalition, won 80% of the delegates, Paz's coalition took only 10% and independents took the other 10%. This makes the UDP look pretty good going into the elections.

It seems likely that neither the "Banzeristas" nor Paz's coalition will be very far from the center of power regardless of who wins the election. If the UDP wins, its success will hinge on its ability to maintain the support of the unions, the peasant organizations and the *generacionalistas* in the armed forces. The latter being the only force holding back another military coup by the far-right.

For background on Bolivia see N/I Nos. 187, 190, 211, 215 and 223.

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lated him, although he has recently opportunistic-ally broken relations with Egypt. In addition, the Iranian revolution, which was followed closely by the Moroccan population, has furnished a contagious example, considering the numerous institutional similarities between the two regimes. In fact, the Shah's taking refuge in Morocco following the revolution created such a stir of protest that Hassan was forced to ask the Shah to leave the country, fearing that his continued presence could provide the fuel to ignite a dangerous tide of mass anger. Even certain sectors of the army are not dependable. Hassan survived two coups in 1971 and 1972, and according to *frique-Asie*, a French monthly, nineteen officers recently were killed after a third coup attempt which was aborted at the last moment.

So the Hassan regime finds itself in a situation incomparably more difficult than in 1975, when it had to make important structural changes in the government. The regime is now relying on support from the new technocratic and industrial bourgeoisie, which is germinating from the reformist parties, UNFP and USFP. These parties have a patriotic and opportunistic orientation and, like Hassan, fear a mass movement which threatens to upset their reconciliation attempts with the monarch. With their support, Hassan may be able to maintain a precarious balance a while longer. But this appearance of consensus is fragile. Although one cannot yet speak of turning a page of history, this is definitely a likely assumption.

NICARAGUA, continued from page 18

paign of denigration and deformation of its objectives" on the part of some sectors of the Sandinista Front. "Some want to present us as traitors ready to line up with the Somoza government, whereas we want unity, based on mutual respect and complete equality, with the FPN." It was after FAO's discussions with FPN that Somoza hit the FAO, detaining two of its leaders. Dismayed by the economic crisis, embittered by Somoza's greediness, and isolated by the F.S.L.N., the bourgeois opposition appears to be deprived of breathing room.

Table of contents

The gay movement and the French left.....	2
Left unity efforts fail on eve of Italian elections.....	4
Search for Red Brigades becomes witch-hunt in Italy.....	6
Spain: Left coalitions gain control in major cities.....	6
Fascist violence on the upswing in Spain.....	7
Elections planned in Bolivia.....	9
Islam and the West on the attack in Afghanistan.....	10
Turkey: NATO's Eastern flank under siege.....	11
White flight: Southern Africans look to Bolivia.....	13
Morocco and the Polisario Front.....	14
Women and the European Parliamentary elections.....	16
Nicaragua update.....	18

Note to our readers

We remind our readers that we are taking our annual vacation during June. There will, therefore, be no July issue of *Newsfront International*; look for us again in August.

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